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141.





The Coal Club at the Star.

CHURCH SKETCHES

FOR

English Cottagers.

THE COUNTRY PARSON, WHEN ANY OF HIS CURE IS SICK,
OR AFFLICTED WITH LOSS OF FRIEND OR ESTATE, OR ANY
WAYS DISTRESSED, FAILS NOT TO AFFORD HIS BEST
COMFORT.—*Herbert's Country Parson.*

LONDON:

SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL, STATIONERS' COURT;

1851.

141. d. 79. Digitized by Google



The Coal Club at the Star.



The Coal Club at the Star.

“Well, William,” said the wife of a labourer, as he entered his cottage gate, and throwing down his spade, seated himself on the rude oak bench beside the rose-wreathed porch, “have you thought any more about the Coal Club? our District Visitor will be here to-morrow, and she has told me to a”

you to try and pay sixpence a week, that we may have a few sacks cheap at Christmas; we shall certainly be better able to spare a small sum at a time, than a large one at once; and coals are always acceptable; we cannot get too many in, ready for the winter, please God we live to see it: besides they will be so much cheaper — nearly half the price we should have to give at Christmas."

"This may be all very true," interrupted William; "but why did you not tell her I am going to subscribe to the Club at the Star, yonder—I can't pay to both; and one's as good as another, I dare say."

"Why, I believe not, exactly," replied his wife; "for to my thinking, you may pay *dear* for coals, if you go to the public-house to give in your money."

"There now, Mary," said William, rather angrily; "I suppose you mean to say, I shall spend all my money in beer. Do I ever take too much, or spend my money to waste? and do you suppose I am likely to do so now, by belonging to the Coal Club at the Star?"

“Why, to tell you the truth, I have been very uneasy about this ever since you first mentioned it,” said Mary; “you may be a sober man now, William, and thank God, I may say you are one; but there are a great many temptations put in people’s way, when once they go into a public-house, whatever it may be for; besides you cannot think of making use of the landlord’s room, without laying out something there; and from half a pint we cannot tell but that it may come to more than may be good for you. You will meet with bad companions too, who will lead you into evil; and then, instead of the happy evenings we now spend together, I shall sit alone, and you will be at the ale-house. Oh! I cannot bear to think of what this may come to.”

“Nonsense, nonsense, Mary,” said William, pettishly, “depend upon it this won’t be; I can take care of myself; and you may be sure we shall be quite as comfortable as ever.”

“Do you remember what happened to our neighbours the Watsons, by belonging

to one of those Coal' Clubs?" asked Mary, after a short silence; "as soon as the man had collected a good sum from all the poor people that were foolish enough to give it him, he ran off with it all, and was never heard of again; not a coal either, did any of the members see for their money."

"Well, well, Mary; this may be all very true," said William; "but such a thing is not likely to happen again, and it's no use talking about it now, for I've put down my name, and paid one week's subscription. It's all right enough, never fear; and this is our pay night, so I must be off," continued he, taking up his hat, and setting down the curly-headed blue-eyed boy who had climbed upon his knee, "I shan't be late; you won't be long alone," and he walked slowly down the green lane, through which he had seldom passed, without his wife and children at his side. Now he went through it alone, thinking over what his wife had said; and trying to satisfy his mind, that no harm could come of what he was going to do.

Alone, in the once happy cottage, sat poor

Mary. "This is the effect of the first pay night, I suppose," said she to herself, as she looked out into the dark lane, then closed the window-shutters, and seated herself by the solitary hearth. "Oh who could have advised him to do this? He knew it was wrong I think, or else he would have said something to me about it before." A tear stole down her cheek, as she looked round the lonely room; but she hastily wiped it away, and rose to prepare her husband's supper, and put the place tidy, that he might come to a comfortable fire-side to enjoy his evening meal. It was late before he returned, later than he had ever been; but not one word of reproof fell from the lips of Mary, she was sadder than usual, but William told her she need not look so unhappy, for he had had only one pint with a friend, and had spent a very pleasant evening.

This did not make her any happier, certainly; for once, she told him, he was never so happy as at home with her, and she warned him, most affectionately warned him, of the ruin she too plainly foresaw that would

come upon them through this Coal Club at the Star.

Week after week passed on, and William was never known to be absent from the Club. The number of his companions had increased, some of them, as might be expected, were bad characters, and very soon he was seen entering the ale-house with them, more nights than one, in the week. His wife had ceased to be alarmed when he did not return as usual to his nice hot supper, but she was very unhappy.

One night as she sat watching and listening to every step that came up the lane, the unsteady foot that approached her door, made her start and tremble. "This can never be my husband," thought Mary, drawing aside the curtains, and peeping through the window. It was, indeed, the steady, sober William of a few weeks past, so intoxicated, that as she opened the door, he reeled into the room, and sank almost insensible into the first chair he came to.

"Oh William ! William !" cried poor Mary, as she bent over her cruel husband ;

at and with trembling hands, tried to loosen
his handkerchief. "How could you do so?"
but he only looked angrily upon her, and
staggered to the bed, upon which he heavily
threw himself, and lay till morning, insensi-
ble to all around. His wife watched him the
whole night through. It was the first time
she had ever seen him the worse for what
he had taken; and when day-light came,
how sincerely did she thank God, that he
had permitted him once more to recover his
senses.

William appeared sorry, truly sorry, for
what had happened: sorry, that he had so
alarmed his kind wife, and made her sit up
all night; and with many promises never
again to let any one persuade him to go into
a public-house, excepting to the Coal Club at
the Star, they sat down to their breakfast,
but with a gloom upon their countenances
that had never rested there before.

But bad habits once formed, are not so
easily got rid of, so William found: the com-
panions he had been with, were not so willing
to leave him, as he perhaps might be to leave

them : and then it would not do to refuse to go with them and be laughed at, so with their wicked persuasions his poor wife was now nearly forgotten, and there were very few nights in the week, that he was ever at home till late, and very few times in the week, that he came home sober. But this was not all, when he did come home, where was now the nice hot supper—the smile of his kind and cheerful wife, to bless and refresh him after his daily toil—where were the laughing prattling children, with the wood to make boats, to swim upon the stream ? they had gone supper-less to bed, and cried themselves to sleep. But did he care for all this now ? Oh, no, his bad companions had made him as bad as themselves, and there was no happiness left him now, any where but with them, he cared for none of the dear ones he once so loved, they were nothing to him now, he had alike forgotten, them and the God who made him, and why ? because he had chosen the ways of sin, and forsaken the paths that lead alone to holiness and peace. Sunday came, the day which the

Lord hath made; the streams and trees—the birds and cattle—yea the very skies and sunshine seemed touched with holy calmness—the church bells had begun to chime, and neatly dressed villagers, coming forth from different parts of the village, all drawing toward the same holy point, the church of their fathers, appeared in every direction.

But where was William? had he as usual, with his neatly dressed wife and children, joined the happy band? why were they not among them? because the money that had always been put by for clothes, had been spent in beer, and they had no clothes to go in; the children's shoes were quite worn out, and all they had once possessed had been parted with to pay the rent; and this, through belonging to the Coal Club at the Star.

The happiness that he once found in the ways of religion, he looked for now from the ways of wickedness; he had forgotten that what ever we do, whether we eat, or whether we drink, we must do all to the glory of God; that we should never let earthly things draw

our affections from God ; but as Christ's servants we should watch, and be ready prepared for his coming to judge the earth—was William so prepared ? it is to be feared not ; he could not be anxiously awaiting Christ's coming—he could not be desirous of being with him, having thus despised him, and become so satisfied with the false enjoyments of this vain and miserable world. He had ceased to think of all Christ had done and suffered for us, to bring us to God ; in short, he who had once lived in the fear and love of God, had by one small fault brought misery upon himself, and wretchedness upon his starving wife and children.

“ Oh ! if I had but known, if I could but have foreseen the consequences of belonging to the Coal Club at the Star,” said William. as he sat one day by the bed-side of his apparently dying wife, while his children clung round him, crying for food, and he had none to give them, “ this would not have happened.”

“ Did I not warn you, William ? ” said poor Mary, in a low and gentle tone ; “ did I

not tell you what would be the end of belonging to any thing at an ale-house? but it is all too late—God's will be done, no human power, I fear, 'can save me from the grave; but you, William, have yet time, it is to be hoped, to alter, and return to what you once were, a sober, honest, industrious man. Remember, although for these many, many months, you have led a bad life, there is pardon offered by God through Jesus Christ for the greatest sinnér, if he repent and turn from his evil ways, and pray for forgiveness and help from God, to become better."

"Is there, Mary?" said William, starting, and brushing away with his thin, hard hand, the tear that had trickled down his cheek; "but I remember now, we are told in the Bible, thère is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared; but will he forgive one so deep in sin as me?"

"Yes, William," answered his wife, "if you pray to God to pardon you for the sake of Jesus Christ."

"Let us pray now, my poor Mary," said the penitent man, throwing himself upon his

knees by the bed-side of his starving wife ;
“your advice this time shall not be given in
vain.”

Long and earnestly did they pray for that
pardon and mercy, which, by the truly
penitent, is never sought in vain ; and as
William rose from his knees, with the traces
of tears left upon his pale, thin cheek, the latch
of the door was raised, and before them stood
the Curate of St. James's. No one had for
some time been near their lone and wretched
dwelling, for they had been ashamed to ask
for relief from any one ; but now how kindly
and carefully was their every want and grief
enquired into, by this faithful steward of his
Lord. Spiritual food—food for the soul, as
well as for the body, was speedily adminis-
tered—the whole story, word for word, had
been related by the penitent William, and
the medical attendant, who was now called
in, having given hopes, that by wholesome
and strengthening nourishment, Mary, might,
with the blessing of God, be yet again res-
tored to health ; the clergyman's wife was
soon seen hastening towards their humble

dwelling, laden with every thing she could hastily prepare for the poor invalid.

In a very short time their kind attention was blessed and rewarded by a visible alteration in the health of poor Mary; and William forgot not to thank for it, the Giver of all good things; his children too—his shoeless boys—were clothed and sent to school, and work procured for their father, upon his promising never to return to his bad habits.

The clergyman still visited them, and endeavoured to impress upon William's mind, the sin of which he found he had been guilty.

One evening while visiting his wife the labourer returned from his work, and as in the days of former comfort, threw down his spade and straw-hat, and took upon his knees his curly-headed boy, bidding him be silent while the gentleman was speaking.

"It would be well, if he would all remember," said Mr. Lawton, when silence was restored; "indeed, it is our duty to bear in mind that there are but two worlds, the

present and the future ; two spaces of existence, time and eternity ; and, if we would enjoy either the one or the other, or both, we are directed to look to him, in whose hands it rests to make them severally, to each of us, sources of pleasure or misery. It is to God that we must pray, whether we desire the things that are, or the things that are not seen, or whether we seek to be upheld and comforted in life, or to be received and blessed after our death ; and, although we may not hope for rest, in a life of suffering, or expect peace in a sea of trouble ; nevertheless even for a relief for our daily necessities, and a supply for our temporal wants, must we be found before the Throne of God, and wait humbly upon his providence ; and while most ready to acknowledge the superiority of things spiritual, to things temporal, and more anxious to secure our happiness in the eternal world, than our prosperity in this, may we, aye, and it is our bonnded duty so to do, say as our Saviour has taught us. ‘ Give us this day our daily bread.’ To the Father of Mercies alone

we look for our preservation. As children we should approach, and own our dependence upon His fatherly goodness.

“We should crave His helping hand, and ask for His blessing upon our labours. We know that it will avail us nothing even tho’ we rise up early and late take rest, unless he himself is pleased to minister to our wants. God’s is the gift, whether we eat or whether we drink—the gift of his unmerited mercy. For this is what our Saviour intended to teach us, that no matter how clever and industrious we may be, nothing will succeed unless God prospers and permits it.

“Man should not be more distrustful of the goodness of his Maker, than the raven above his head, or the lilly at his feet. Our heavenly father feedeth and clotheth them ; and careth he not as much for us ? are we not equally dear—are not our interests equally precious, in the sight of God, with those of the creatures we see every where around us, and over whom we enjoy an absolute dominion ? are not the very hairs of our head said to be numbered, and our

safety to be the object of God's special attention? Therefore we must subdue that covetousness of spirit, that proud ungrateful wish to be independent of the Creator, so flattering to the carnal heart, and day by day, ere we go to our work and to our labour, let the words of Jesus be upon our lips, and their power on our soul; and let us say—"Give us this day our daily bread." So bless the labours of our heads and of our hands, and crown our care and industry with a reasonable success, that we may thereby be enabled to obtain from day to day, the things that are necessary for the support of our life, and become our station and calling in this world.

"How different, indeed," Mr Lawton went on to remark, seeing his attentive listeners appeared anxious for instruction, "how different, indeed, is the wisdom of man from the knowledge of God: had we to frame our own petitions, had we not a pattern of prayer in our Saviour's own words, how little should we know what to ask, or in what manner to ask it; what a train of evils which we ought to shun, would be pressed into our petitions,

what an amount of good we ought to beg for, would be as certainly omitted in them. Were we sensual, we should be asking for pleasure, and that the cup of empty and false joys might be held brimful to our lips. Were we ambitious, honour would be our desire, we should pray for its hollow praises and unsatisfying rewards. But Christ admonishes us, in the short, but beautiful and comprehensive form of words which he has given us, that we should pray not only for our daily bread, but that we should ask for forgiveness of our numerous offences against his Divine Majesty; and in the exact proportion that we forgive others, we should seek to be forgiven of God, that he would keep us from the temptations that surround us on every side, that we may become more virtuous, and learn holiness more easily.

“Happy are they who can feel fully persuaded that the Mighty Dispenser of all things is their friend; and that whatever they do, whether they eat, or whether they drink, to do all to the glory of God.

“As it is as certain that we have a body

and a soul! that we must live for ever: shall we confine our prospect to the narrow horizon of this world, without thinking of the land that stretches away beyond it? shall we toil and labour for the meat that perisheth and feel no concern for that which endureth unto everlasting life? shall we be slow and remiss in providing for eternity? shall we be eager for the body, and careless for the soul? not if we be Christians—not if we know our true interests.

The soul we are aware, as well as the body, must have support—her claims upon our care are no less important though more frequently over-looked—her hopes extend beyond the grave—her existence is eternity itself; and the means by which we may do our souls good, is the strengthening them with heavenly food, the body and blood of Christ.

“I fear William,” said Mr. Lawton, “you have forgotten this part of your duty altogether; but slight no longer, I beseech you, the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper; nor turn heedlessly away from the benefits it

would offer you. You have a spiritual, as well as a natural life to take care of; and you would be as unreasonable in supposing your body could live and thrive without food, as that your soul could flourish and be vigorous without supplies of grace. Think of this—and delay not. The destroying angel has lately hovered over your dwelling, and may be now pausing on your threshold, and your soul may be soon demanded of you. Then how will you be able to meet your God, if you have despised his commandments? to meet your Saviour, if you have forgotten his last affectionate request yourself, when you find that you are your own destroyer. *YE WOULD not come unto Me that ye might have life.* Oh, the withering and unanswerable rebuke. The table was spread, but ye would not approach it; the messengers sent to bid you, but ye heeded them not. think of this, and be not so unthankful for the many mercies lately bestowed upon you, as to despise that bounteous feast which our heavenly Father has provided for us; nor so reckless of your high privileges as to neglect any opportunity

of being made partaker of Christ's most blessed body and blood. And forasmuch as there is but one great and Holy Being, who can alike bless us in our bodies and our souls, and afford them the refreshment they need, and the strength they require, whether for earth or heaven, for time or eternity ; let us then at once turn to the source of all good, and say to him, heartily, sincerely, and faithfully, ' Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our tresspasses as we forgive them that tresspass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, and ever, Amen.' "

Thinking the present a desirable opportunity, Mr. Lawton continued, " the habit of assembling our families and household together, for domestic worship, although lamentably neglected by many who carefully observe the more private, as well as public forms of religion, is a duty no less incumbent on all who would order ' their household aright ; God has said ' wherever two or

three are met together in my name there am I in the midst of them, and that to bless them ;' and will not every Member of the Church of Christ desire that the presence of God, may indeed be manifested, not only in the public assembly of His people, but in the social circle, amongst those most dear to him, that having united their hearts in prayer to him at the commencement of the day, they may go forward to their employments with God's blessing upon them, and that at night, having unitedly commended themselves, with thanks for all His mercies, to His gracious care, they may lie down in peace and safety, to take their rest."

William, who was indeed deeply impressed with the goodness of God, in working the happy change that had been effected in him, thanked Mr. Lawton for the kind instructions he had given them, and at the same time promised that by God's help he would ever remember, and constantly practise all that he had taught them. A short but fervent prayer concluded the visit of this good minister, and we may believe that it was indeed blessed to them

all. Happiness and tranquility were again restored to this little family, and morning and evening the sounds of prayer and praise might be heard within their humble dwelling: as soon as Mary was strong enough to walk, the first place she visited, with her neatly dressed children and husband, was the House of God; and with him, after further instruction from their minister, partook of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

William could never bear to hear the Coal Club mentioned; and Mary promised him she would never speak of it, if he would assure her he would never go again to the public-house—for that, or any other bad purpose."

"By the help of God," said William, "I promise you;"—and to the hour of his death he kept his word!

Farmer Smith.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment."—1 Cor. chap. 1. ver x.



Farmer Smith.

CHAPTER I.—THE CHURCH.

“You are early this morning, my good man,” said Mr. Grayson, addressing himself to a farmer, who met him at the door of his neat and lowly dwelling, apparently about to go to the House of God; “The bells have not yet begun to chime—I doubt if the doors are opened; but it is better to be early, it looks as if we were really anxious to go there for the purpose of confessing our sins and worshipping God.”

The man looked on the ground, and turned round and round his straw hat, but did not answer.

“John is not going to Church, Sir,” cried his wife from within, and to whom the clergyman had come to read before the service, as a long illness had prevented her leaving the house to attend public worship. “John is not going to Church, he attends Mr. Jones’s meeting now, Sir.”

“How is this, Smith,” said the clergyman, “what fault can you find in the Church sufficiently great to compel you to leave it. Tell me—for what reason do you now go to meeting?”

“Oh, I hardly know Sir,” said the farmer, “I think one is as good as the other; I see no difference. The Bible, Sir, is what I say we should go by; and I can hear that explained at the Meeting as well as the Church.”

“And how long have you thought so? you used once to be a very regular attendant at the Church, and appeared quite satisfied with its ordinances. I suppose you took some time to consider what you were going to do?”

“Why, no Sir, I didn’t think much about

it," answered the man. "I merely thought it didn't signify which I went to ; and as the Chapel was nearest, and one or two companions went there, I thought I might as well go too."

"I am very sorry, Sir," interrupted Mrs. Smith, "that John has done so, because I think there is no place of worship so good as the Church ; and it appears to me a sin to leave it, and so I have told him."

"You are quite right," said Mr. Grayson ; "it is a sin—and a greater sin in the sight of God than many persons suppose."

"How so, Sir ?" asked Smith. "We surely may worship God as we please ; and, as I said before, the Bible is all that I can see we have to go by ; and, therefore, I cannot understand why the Church is better than dissent."

"Sit down my good fellow," said Mr. Grayson, taking a seat on a well polished oaken bench ; "sit down, and I will tell you. The Church is best, because it is in the first place, the guide to truth ; the true faith is contained in the Bible, and is taught by the

Church. You say the Bible is sufficient ; but God, as well as the Bible, has given us this Church to teach us ; and if we set aside the help which God has given for our instruction, and depend upon our own judgment, then we do not read the Bible in that humble manner in which we are commanded to."

"The guardian of the Church is the Bible; into the branch in England the errors that had crept in, at the Reformation were all set aside, and was, as it were, re-made after the model of the ancient Church, as it stood at the time, or very soon after the time of the Apostles ; nothing was altered but what was contrary to God's Word: such as worshipping images, and that kind of thing. Our Church is in fact the ancient church revived; and its creeds—that is our belief, has been received from the highest antiquity. According to them it is that our clergy are bound to instruct the people—not interpreting the scriptures by their private judgment, but conforming their instructions to the doctrines of the Church, of which they are ministers. If you

interpret the Bible for yourselves, in opposition to your appointed teachers, the chances of your falling into error are very great.

“God,” as I said before, has in his great mercy, given to his faithful servants the Church as well as the Bible; and to accept the one without the other is to avail ourselves of but half of his bounties.

“Suppose, for instance, every family in the parish had a Bible, and was required to make out a religion for itself; is it not evident that there would be in all probability as many sects, that is as many parties of one opinion, as there were families; or perhaps, more.

“But, suppose, in addition to their Bible, divine providence commissioned a minister to instruct them in revealed doctrine, *out of the Bible, but not contrary to it*; then if they reverently listened to him, there would be great hope of their being united in one Christian Church. Such is the condition of the great Christian family. God has not only given them his revealed Word, but also his ordained ministry to teach them accord-

ing to that word. So long as they keep to both they are safe; but if, like the Roman Catholic, they leave the Church without hearing or reading the Bible; or like the Dissenter they reject the teaching of the Church, and interpret the Bible according to their own fancy, they are sure to fall into grievous errors."

"Then, do you mean to say, Sir, that the Church is the same that it was at the time of the apostles?"

"Yes, Smith, I do. The Church of England is the same as that founded by the apostles; and, therefore, it is called Apostolic and Catholic, which means universal—everywhere.

"But how was the Church first made, Sir, may I make so bold as to ask?"

"The formation of the Christian Church," answered Mr. Grayson, "and its history down to the present time, are plain historical facts. Our Lord told his Apostles to preach the Gospel to all mankind; and as many as believed were admitted to His Church by Baptism, and thereby became entitled to all

those privileges, upon the right use of which their eventual salvation depends. 'By one spirit,' says St. Paul, 'are we all baptized into one body.'"

"But still, Sir, as our Saviour told the apostles to preach, and not us, I cannot see why we should not make any alteration we please," said Smith.

"The Apostles, in order to admit continually new members to the Church," continued Mr. Grayson, "and to minister to them in holy things, appointed others,—that is why we must still do so—a three-fold order of priesthood, each having its various duties to perform, and the Church of Christ became a society possessing great and glorious privileges, consisting of duly baptised Christians, and duly ordained or appointed ministers. Such it has continued from the times of the Apostles to the present; and such, we doubt not, it will continue—for we have God's own promise—even to the end of the world."

"I make no doubt, Sir," said Smith, "that you know best about it; but still I want to

know what *sin* there is in leaving, or in not belonging to this Church?"

"The sin consists in the very act of separation; as it is one of the great rules in their gospel," replied the clergyman, "that there should be no division in the Church but that Christians should be united. No crime is more spoken against in Scripture than that of separating from the Church founded by Christ and his Apostles."

"Indeed, Sir," said the farmer, "I was not aware of this; where can I find it? I should not like to appear self-willed upon the subject, especially to you Sir, who must know best—as you have had more learning than I have; and, I really begin to see, what I never knew before, that it is better to belong to the Church than the Meeting, because the sin of separating from it appears so great; but it is detaining you now Sir, for I hear the bells; another time, perhaps, you will be so kind as to tell me more about it; and until I see greater reasons for leaving the Church I will no longer go to the Meeting."

“I am glad to hear you say so, Smith, and I hope, in a short time, to convince you of the great sin of separating from the church; that you will never think of leaving it again.”

As Mr. Grayson spoke these last words, he arose, and taking the Bible from the shelf, prepared to read to the sick woman, choosing for the morning's portion, a chapter suited to the occasion—when he had ended reading, she joined him in a short and fervent prayer of the Church,—and asking God's blessing on its inmates, the Rector left the cottage to perform his accustomed duties.

Not long after this conversation, the Rector met Smith as he was returning from his fields, who reminded him of his promise to tell him more about the sin of leaving the the Church. “I have been thinking a great deal about what you told me, Sir,” said he, “ever since last Sunday; but I cannot think how it is proved that the Church clergymen are more proper to preach than any one else—and why Dissenters are not as fit to have chapels as any other ministers.”

“I know, Smith,” said Mr. Grayson, “that this is no uncommon question among people who think it of little importance whether they go to the Church or the Meeting: but it is nevertheless a question of very great consequence; and it is very necessary to know what directions are given to us by the Divine head of the Church for our guidance in these and like particulars. And though *I* am well convinced that the practice of the Church of Christ, from the time of the Apostles downwards, affords a rule strictly binding upon us, since St. Paul himself styles the Church ‘the pillar and ground of the truth,’ yet, as *you* are not so satisfied upon this point, we will appeal to a standard to which every one, who calls himself a Christian, must feel compelled to look for an answer—the Bible, and the Bible only. If you wish to know how it is proved that the ordained Church clergymen are more fit persons for preaching than Dissenting ministers, we must look back to the times of the apostles, and find out how they acted under the instruction of their Divine

Master ; we follow his and their instructions in some things, why not therefore in this. But let us first turn to the Old Testament—we find that, under the Jewish dispensation, it was indispensable to the acceptable worship of God, that those who undertook the office of the ministry should have received *their authority in regular* succession, from those who had held the sacred office before them from Aaron downwards. In the Jewish Church there were three degrees of sacred officers, with distinct duties to perform, called High Priests, Priests, and Levites. In order to be admitted to any of the three, it was required that the individual should be of the tribe of Levi, and the office of the Priesthood was exclusively restricted to the line of the family of Aaron : in the 7th. verse of the xviiiith chapter of Numbers, we find that ‘the stranger that came nigh’ (that is, presumed to interfere) was commanded to be put to death.”

“But, Sir, allow me to ask you what this has to do with the clergymen of the Church.”

“Every thing my good fellow,” answered

Mr. Grayson, "as you will presently see if you will patiently listen to what I am about to tell you. The extreme importance which was attached to a strict adherence to this rule is very striking. It is mentioned particularly among the sins of Jeroboam, that he 'made priests who were not of the sons of Levi,' (1 Kings xii. 31.) In the war which took place between him and Abijah, the latter, in his remonstrance with Jeroboam and Israel, mentions, as a special ground of confidence, that God would be with Judah, and against *them*, because the kingdom of Judah had *preserved the peculiar ordinances* of the Most High, while Israel had forsaken them, (2 Chron. xiii. 9—12.)

"Yet how, Sir," asked Smith, "does this apply to us? We have no High Priest now, nor any thing in our Church like the Jews had in their Synagogue."

"True," replied Mr. Grayson, "but we must naturally expect that the Divine Being who gave such strict and precise rules, enforced by sanctions so awful, with respect to his Church of old, would not leave our

Church (of which we are told that the former is a shadow or imperfect sketch,) *without some similar provision for the regular ministration of its ordinances;*" and thus we see our Saviour himself acting as the Bishop and chief shepherd of his flock. The twelve apostles being next in order, under him, and the seventy disciples forming a third order of sacred officers with an inferior degree of authority; and now we have Archbishops, Bishops, and Priests."

"But when, Sir, did our Saviour particularly appoint the Apostles to preach the gospel.

"Before he ascended into heaven; and he did so with great solemnity, giving the eleven apostles authority to teach; and to them, St. Matthias and St. Paul were afterwards added by special appointment."

"But where do we find our Lord giving them authority to be governors of his Church, or to form the society into which you say converts were to be received by holy baptism, to minister the ordinances of the Church, and to ordain others to succeed them in the office of the ministry?"

“In the xxviiiith chapter of St. Matthew’s Gospel, and the 18, 19, and 20th verses we find our Saviour giving them the authority you seem to think questionable, and declaring his intention to assist them by his own presence and power. ‘And Jesus came and spake unto them,’ (that is to the eleven disciples mentioned in the 16th verse) saying, ‘all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ Teaching them to ‘*observe all things* wheresoever I have commanded you, and *lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*’ And therefore when the gospel was first preached, steadfast continuance in the fellowship of the apostles is particularly insisted on, as one necessary mark of a member of the Church of Christ.”

“But are we told in the Bible, Sir, of any peculiar form of worship that we were commanded to adopt?”

“No; we certainly do not find mention there made of any plans or rules for public

worship in the Christian Church. There are no rites prescribed, but the two Sacraments of Baptism, and of the Lord's Supper, instituted by our Lord. All that we know of what was done in the first churches, is by what we find mentioned in the epistles written by the apostles."

"Then where is the necessity of our having any particular form of worship at all?" asked Smith.

"The Church, remember, my good fellow," said Mr. Grayson, "is a society of Christian men; and every society, you know, must be governed: and governed by officers in whose hands must be placed the general authority to be exercised for the benefit of the whole society. And therefore our Reformers gave the Church, or society of Christian brethren power to make ceremonies; but never to order any thing that is contrary to God's *word written*. For instance, what order or regularity would there be in any of the societies formed in this town, without officers to rule them?"

"The Provident Society has its president

and committee to regulate its proceedings ; and unless you agree to be guided by the laws these officers make, you can no longer be considered a member of that society. So it is with the Church and Dissenters : there are a certain set of people who will not submit to the authority of the Church in belief, or any thing, and, therefore, leave it, to belong to societies of men, whom they must still, in some measure, obey in the matter of forms and ceremonies ; then wherefore need they leave the Church, that old and well tried society, that for 1800 years has stood above all the rest as better governed—and besides this, can trace to the very Apostles themselves its first formation ?

“The grievous sin of Dissent lies in this ; *the separating and causing divisions in the society or Church, formed by Christ and his Apostles.* The Lord, himself says in the 18th of St. Matthew’s Gospel, 17th verse, ‘If any man neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican : and St. Paul tells us in the 14th chapter of Romans, 7th verse, ‘Now,

from the Church, let us, my good friend, be ever mindful to 'contend earnestly for the faith which was once (for all) delivered to the saints,' (Jude iii.) Religion is said by some to be a private affair between each man and his Maker; and, therefore, that no one need make mention of religion in society, but that he must behave, with regard to all religious matters, in much the same manner as we do with regard to any thing else, except that we must be more cautious and serious. If you heard any society to which you belong spoken ill of, and wrongfully accused of some breach of trust, you would feel yourself called on to defend it in a firm yet temperate manner. So, if you hear the Church attacked, or its principles called in question, it is your duty to protest against the accusation or mis-statement; it is the duty of Christians to bear testimony to the truth, even at the risk of giving offence; always make a rule to appeal to scripture, and that will generally settle the argument, even if it does not convince

few men like to find themselves opposing the word of God."

"Where do your children go to school?" enquired Mr. Grayson, as two or three little curly-headed boys came running to meet their father, and unabashed by the presence of their kind pastor, with their noisy mirth put an end to the conversation.

"They go to different schools, Sir—Billy, to the Church Infant School in the week, and on Sunday to Mr. Jones's—and the others go I hardly know where, Sir. Some dissenting ladies came and asked my wife to let them go—I believe they are clothed in their schools, and that, you know, Sir, is a great inducement for poor people with large families,—but I suppose it is hardly right, if we belong to the Church to let the children go to Dissenters schools."

"Why, I think there can be no question about it, my good man. If we belong to the Church, and our children have been baptized in it, it is certainly not correct to bring them up at Dissenters' schools,—but I must talk to you more about this in a day or

two,—it is a subject of more importance than many are aware of.” So saying, Mr. Grayson shook the honest farmer heartily by the hand, and patting the rosy cheeks of his children, wished them good evening.





Farmer Smith.

CHAPTER II.

THE sun was setting behind the distant hills, and the voices of the children from the cottages, as they played at hide-and-seek among the furze and hawthorn bushes, burst merrily upon the Pastor's ear as he passed over the common to Smith's cottage. The time, when he had been first in the merry game, and, as a thoughtless and light-hearted boy, had won many a race on that very spot, came as plainly back to his memory, as though no years had passed between the shadowy past and present season of thought and care.

Farmer Smith stood leaning over his garden paling watching the childrens' sport; but as soon as Mr. Grayson approached, he walked quickly forward, and opening the

littlegate, humbly but earnestly bade him welcome to his homely dwelling. His wife, who was now something better, sat in the chimney-corner knitting stockings for her boy George, as the clergyman entered; and the gentle but animated smile that lit up her pale countenance, told how glad she was to see him. As soon as he was seated on his favourite oaken-bench, she told him how pleased she had been by the account her husband had given her of his conversation respecting the Church. "And now, Sir," she continued, "I hope you have come to talk to us about the childrens' schooling, for I cannot help thinking that we should not let them go to Dissenters' schools, as we have had them christened at the Church. I certainly never thought so much about it till I heard what you had been saying to John; but it now appears to me of great consequence whether they go to a Church or Dissenting school."

"It is of some consequence, certainly, as you say," replied Mr. Grayson, "and as I was telling Smith the other evening, of more

importance than many people think. I know some say that children are too young to learn any thing about religion, and that they teach them at Mr. Jones's, just the same things as they do at the Church schools; but such is not the case. At most schools the children are taught to read the Bible; and of course it is explained to them either according to the opinions of the Church, or those of Dissenters, to whom the school belongs."

"Yes, Sir; and then the child must learn to follow the opinions of those who teach him."

"Certainly: we cannot teach religion without teaching some particular sort of religion, though there are not wanting those who from a mistaken notion of liberality would seek to bring up our children in Schools from which Religious Knowledge is entirely excluded, and it would be easy to to enlarge on this evil, and show what active exertions are used by the authority and even ridicule of sectarian teachers—by the force of sympathy among the children—by school-

books containing distorted representations of facts—false reasonings upon religious truths—to loosen the hold which the church has upon the hearts of her little ones, and it is of no use setting children to read the Bible without explaining the meaning of it to them. Words, which to you or I would appear perfectly plain, would not be understood by children who read them for the first time. Suppose a child to read the words which form a part of the commission given by our Lord to the Apostles: ‘He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved,’ words which may be considered as containing the first principles of the Gospel, how very little meaning this would have to a child, unless they were explained to him; and unless here told that being ‘saved,’ means ‘being released from sin in this world, and received unto glory hereafter,’—and that they who would be saved, must acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, and be baptized by his ministers: and unless he also be told that ‘belief’ or faith must be shown by goodness of life;—

and that holiness of life can only be obtained by prayer to God, to send his Holy Spirit into our hearts. When told this, the child is, at the same time, taught the great doctrines of the divinity of our Lord; justification by faith, and sanctification by the spirit, which are the peculiar opinions of the true Church, and contrary to those of the Romanist, and some of the Dissenters. Without a proper explanation of such texts as these, the Bible could never be understood."

"Then you think, Sir, that these principles or opinions should be explained to *children* even, and that they cannot understand the Bible without."

"Certainly; it is quite impossible for them to know what scripture means without these doctrines or opinions, which are in reality nothing more than the scriptures explained."

"And, as you say, Sir, that Churchmen and some Dissenters explain the Bible differently, it is certainly of some consequence where we send our children to be taught."

“Most assuredly—and as we belong to the Church ourselves, because we believe it to have been established by Christ—and consider its doctrines or principles to be those of revealed truth, we should bring up our children in Church principles, because we feel sure that it is the greatest gift which parents can give or children receive ; and, therefore, we should be careful that they are brought up in the same sound doctrine, whereby we ourselves hope to be saved.”

“The importance of sound doctrine, Sir,” said Mrs. Smith, “seems greater than I have been accustomed to consider it—you seem to think a great deal of it.”

“Not more than the Bible teaches us to do,” said Mr. Grayson—“we are commanded to ‘continue in the faith, grounded and settled,’ ‘to hold fast the faithful word which we have been taught;’ ‘to hold fast the form of sound words,’ ‘I beseech you,’ says St. Paul to the Corinthians, ‘by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined

together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.' ”

“It is astonishing how any one can leave the Church or continue a Dissenter after reading these words,” said Mrs. Smith; “and I do sincerely hope John has now thought better of what he is doing, and will go back to the Church.”

“I *have* thought better of it, indeed, Mary,” said Smith, “and through the kindness of our good Rector here, I trust that I now see the folly I was committing in going to Mr. Jones’s Meeting-house—and for our children, Sir—with your permission we will immediately remove them from the Dissenters’ to the Church school.”

“I shall be most happy to receive them, my good fellow,” said Mr. Grayson, “and am very glad you see the importance of thus acting; will you lose any thing by making this alteration?”

“Not any thing equal to the good our children will receive, Sir, I hope,” said Mrs. Smith—“they have been promised some clothes at Christmas, by the ladies who came

and asked me to let them go to their school—but I think, to have them brought up in the principles of the Church, of much more consequence to them than clothes.”

“I wish every mother could say the same, and had her children’s *true interest* as much at heart as you seem to have,” said the Rector, “and I hope you will in every respect try and persuade your neighbours to follow the plans you intend to adopt; but remember, that whatever may be our good resolutions, we can never accomplish any thing by our own strength—of ourselves we can do nothing—on every undertaking we must always beg the blessing of our Almighty Father,—He who alone can lead us in the right path—and who will so lead us, if we come to him in earnest prayer, and beg of Him to guide our wandering steps. I do not believe, with the help of God, you will ever again be inclined to go to the Dissenting Meeting,” he continued, turning to Smith, “and if any one asks why you prefer the Church, tell them because you believe it to be a society of Christian men, formed, in the first

instance, by Christ himself—that it is the keeper and teacher of the truth as it is in Jesus, and that you consider it sinful in the sight of God to be a Dissenter, because Christ and His Apostles have told us not to cause divisions in the Church—and now let me ‘beseech you,’ as St. Paul did the Corinthians, ‘by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.’ And I trust,” concluded Mr. Grayson, laying his hand on the latch of the cottage-door, “that in future, your seat in the Church, Smith, will never, but for very good reasons, be again unoccupied.”

So saying, the Rector bade them good evening, and retraced his steps over the wide common, to his peaceful and rose-wreathed cottage.

The Sacrament.

VAIN EXCUSES, OR PLAIN REASONS,

WHY IT IS THE POOR MAN'S DUTY TO PARTAKE

OF THE

Holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

"This do in remembrance of me."

St. Luke xxii. 19.

22nd chapter of St. Luke's gospel, and not feel convinced that you are among the number of those our Saviour commanded to break bread in remembrance of him? Suppose an earthly friend had made a dying request, would you not overcome any obstacle to performing the command with his wish? Then what excuse can you make for refusing to join with X^p in the breaking of bread?



The Sacrament.

"I am sorry to find you do not receive the Lord's Supper, Mrs. Gray," said the beloved Rector of the beautiful village of St. Mary's, when he, one day, paid a visit to her neat and cleanly dwelling; "it appears very strange to me how you can leave the Church with many of the congregation, and turn from the Lord's table, as though you had nothing to do with it. Can you read the

22nd chapter of St. Luke's gospel, and not feel convinced that you are among the number of those our Saviour commanded to break bread in remembrance of him? Suppose an earthly friend had made a dying request, would you not overcome any obstacle to perform and comply with his wish? Then what excuse can you make for refusing to join with Christ's disciples in breaking bread in remembrance of Him who has done so much for you?"

"I am no scholar, Sir," nimbly replied Mary, as she wiped with her own clean apron the offered and accepted seat. "I am no scholar, Sir; and do not think I ought to take the Lord's Supper, because I cannot understand every thing about religion."

"I do not expect you can, my good woman," replied Mr. Wilson, "there are certain things left mysterious and wonderful to the wisest of mankind, hidden purposely, from our understanding by God; because we are yet too weak and ignorant to comprehend their goodness: the day is yet to

come when those things which we now see, as through a glass darkly, will be fully known and understood ; but it can never be a good and sufficient reason for disobeying your Saviour's dying commands, because you cannot understand every thing about them. Have you taken the pains to learn as much as you can on the subject ; or are you, as it is to be feared many others are, content with making the objection you have just urged a sufficient reason for their absence from the Lord's table ? If so, let me affectionately warn you of the great sin and danger to which you are exposing yourself ; for our duty in this case is plain and clear ; if we obstinately persist in our disobedience to our gracious Redeemer's commands, we infallibly forfeit his favour, do in effect renounce our Christianity, denying the Lord that bought us, and shall find too late that to us Christ is dead in vain."

"Why, Sir, I have thought a good deal about it sometimes," replied Mrs. Gray, "after having heard you preach on the sub-

ject; but the more I hear, the more I feel afraid that, not understanding the matter thoroughly and having so little time left me for preparation, I should not be a worthy partaker, and so think I had better stay away altogether."

"This is a most dangerous error to fall into, believe me," rejoined Mr. Wilson, "and I hope before I have done to convince you that it is so; for feeling as I do the deep responsibility which rests on me as a Christian minister, whose duty it is to watch for souls as one that must give account, I cannot feel happy in seeing any one of my flock neglecting to comply with this command of our dying Lord."

"You are very kind, Sir, to take so much pains with a poor ignorant woman like me," said Mrs. Gray, "but still I feel that I cannot present myself at the Altar without such a preparation as my occupation and the care of a family scarcely leave me time to make, and as it is as much as I can do to get to Church once on a Sunday,

and have no opportunity of thinking of these things in the week, should I not in receiving it expose myself to the danger of eating and drinking unworthily?"

"You misunderstand me, my friend," replied Mr. Wilson, "if you imagine I urge your communion under such circumstances, for the act itself, without any consideration as to its sacred character, and the purposes for which it was instituted, would not be likely to benefit you; indeed if your duties as a Christian be confined to the public worship of God once during the Sabbath, it is to be feared you have little more than the name of Christian, and in that case have need of repentance as a sinner, and faith in the death of Christ as the atonement for your transgressions, before you can commemorate his dying love in a spirit calculated to secure the blessings which we are encouraged to anticipate as the result of our obedience. But surely you have not read, or at least not distinctly understood the Scriptures, if you can make the attention to your ordinary business an objection to your

partaking the Holy Communion. Are you called upon by Christ to neglect your daily occupation in order to serve him acceptably? assuredly not; our Saviour never intended the concerns of the world to be at a stand, and every thing thrown into confusion, which would be the case if we did not labour in our several callings; he charges men, on the contrary, 'not to be slothful in business,' yet at the same time they must be 'fervent in spirit serving the Lord.' His kingdom and righteousness must be *first* sought after, and this may be done without neglecting any one duty you are called upon to fulfil, in the state of life in which it has pleased God to place you; and I know of no preparation more suitable or more acceptable to God, than the daily discharge of that duty in a religious temper and spirit 'as to the Lord and not to man.' If, indeed, you allow the concerns of this world so entirely to engross your attention as to leave no room for God or religion in all your thoughts, you are guilty of a great sin; you are continually forgetting your Maker and Preserver,

and, whether you attend the Communion or not, are preparing for yourself that punishment which is promised to such persons in Psalm ix. 17. The business itself must be lessened, if you cannot otherwise lessen your eagerness in attending it. But this is not necessary: for I deny that either you, or any of those of my flock, who refuse to attend the Lord's Supper, have any need to be so entirely taken up with the duties of their calling, as not to be able to take care of their souls at the same time, and, as one principal proof of their doing so, to obey their Saviour's command in this instance. Look round on your fellow-parishoners and ask yourself whether many of those who are more mindful of their duty in this respect, have not full as good a right to plead worldly business as an excuse for neglect as you have? And as to the plea of unworthiness, a worthy partaker of the Lord's Supper cannot mean one without sin; for if so, no person that ever lived, or that ever shall live (the Holy Saviour excepted) could partake of it; but Christ, who knew what was in man, his

weakness and sinfulness, declared that all his followers, imperfect as they were, if resolving to forsake their sins, trusting in his precious blood alone as the sacrifice for their transgressions, and relying on his prevailing intercession for their acceptance with God, were welcome to approach God's table of mercy to obtain grace and find help and encouragement in their time of need; there is a great difference between being worthy to receive the benefits of the Lord's Supper, and receiving them in a worthy manner. The first we can never be, any more than we can deserve the least of God's mercies; but the last we may do if we sincerely repent of our sins and earnestly desire and endeavour to amend our lives, trusting only in the sacrifice and intercession of Christ for the Divine acceptance of our imperfect services."

"After what you have said, Sir," returned Mrs. Gray, "it would indeed be wrong in me not to think a great deal more seriously on the subject, your words have made a deep impression on my mind, and if you

would not think it too much trouble to advise a poor simple woman, it would be a consolation and help to me, to consult you on points which I do not yet feel quite sure about."

"At any time, Mrs. Gray, I shall be ready to remove any doubt you may have on the subject," replied Mr. Wilson, "and whenever you feel inclined to come to me, we will talk the matter over again ; and I now take my leave of you, with the firm impression that what I have said has awakened in your mind a sense of your obligation in this respect, and I trust will lead you to think more and more on the subject. The excellent and pious Bishop Jeremy Taylor enforces this duty in so pointed and convincing a manner that I cannot deny myself the pleasure of concluding my conversation in his words. '*All Christian people must come to this Holy Supper. They, indeed, that are in a state of sin must not come so, but yet they must come: first, they must quit their state of death, and then partake of the bread of life. They that are at enmity with*

their neighbours must come; that is no excuse for their not coming, only they must not bring their enmity along with them, but leave it and then come. They that have a variety of secular employments must come; only they must leave their secular thoughts and affections behind them, and then come and converse with God. If any man be well grown in grace, he must needs come: because he is excellently disposed to so holy a feast: but he that is but in the infancy of piety had need to come, that so he may grow in grace. The strong must come, lest they become weak; and the weak, that they may become strong. The sick must come to be cured, the healthful to be preserved. They that have leisure must come, because they have no excuse; they that have no leisure must come hither, that by so excellent an act of religion they may sanctify their business. The penitent sinners must come, that they may be justified; and they that are justified, that they be justified still."

With these words the kind Pastor took his leave. Mary, who had been led to think

much on what he had said to her, resolved to profit by his advice, on more than one occasion has visited the Rectory for the further advice of her spiritual guide ; and is now to be seen on each communion day at the Altar, all her doubts removed, all her fears dispelled : and in a far happier frame of mind than she has hitherto been, finds that in the midst of her worldly occupation she by proper management can make time to think of her eternal concerns, and shew her obedience to her Saviour's dying command, " This do in remembrance of me."



The Daily Service.

**"Be still, and lowly bend;
While two or three remain, the Lord is here
And where his presence is, his hosts attend."**



The Daily Service.

“Where is Mary?” enquired Mr. Hamilton, as he seated himself at the breakfast table, one beautiful spring morning, his wife and two of his daughters only having greeted him on his entrance into the breakfast room. “Come, Laura, tell me the cause of your sister’s absence, for by that arch smile I can see there is something you know more than you choose to say.”

“I believe she is from home,” said Emily, at length breaking the silence; “for I saw her cross the Park at an early hour, in the direction of the village; and as it was announced in Church last Sunday that there would be a Sermon every morning, I con-

clude she is gone : and think I should have accompanied her, had I been sufficiently strong to encounter the dampness of the morning."

"Well, this is something quite new," said Mr. Hamilton, sipping his chocolate; "people in my days were contented with going quietly to Church once a week, and saying their prayers at home in the meantime; but now we hear of nothing but going to Church from morning to night, and week's end to week's end; I pity the bell ringers, and to those who live near the Church, it must be an intolerable nuisance, this never ceasing din."

"How can you talk so irreverently of anything relating to the Church?" said Mrs. Hamilton; "I am sure we can never find fault with any one for frequenting the House of God, where no one can go too often, but may go not often enough; and I assure you it was entirely with my approbation and concurrence, that Mary went this morning; I think there is something particularly holy and beautiful in giving our first unfretted

hours to the service of our Maker ; and believe by those who experience the pleasure of going with hearts unshackled by worldly thoughts and feelings to the Morning Service, more pure devotion is felt than at any other time."

"And may not the same devotion be experienced when addressing ourselves to God in our homes," asked Laura ; "I do not exactly see the necessity of *going to Church* in order to experience this devotional feeling, and I think our prayers at home would be quite as acceptable in the sight of God."

"We will say nothing about that, Laura," replied her Mother ; "no doubt a prayer offered any where in the name of Christ would for his sake be acceptable to God ; but it is of the propriety of daily attending the House of God we were speaking ; and I must confess, with an esteemed friend of mine, that although there may be fervency in secret prayer, there is far more of piety and devotion excited in our bosoms when we pray in the great congregation ! How exalting is the idea that multitudes besides ourselves are at

that moment offering their united praises ; and a deep impression of the holiness of the worship, and sanctity of the place affects our hearts with a serious, yet animated devotion. It is not then with us a mere form and lip service, but the service of the heart and understanding, a sacrifice unto the Lord holy and reasonable ; and when we hear, near us, the fervent, pious, and audible response of one, who with a pure heart and humble voice offers up his petition to the throne of grace, the earnestness of his devotion gives a stimulus to those who are near him, and the pious feeling is caught and conveyed onward, kindling new fire of devotion in the hearts of all around ; and then the petitions we there offer to God were many of them used by the first Christians—by these very men who lived in the time, or soon after that of the Apostles themselves ; and besides all this, the duty of our attending Daily Service in our Churches requires nothing to enforce it on our minds, when we know that it was never omitted by the Apostles and disciples of Christ ; and

remember that our Lord himself was *daily* in the Temple."

"Well, Mary," said Mr. Hamilton, as she entered the room accompanied by the Rector, who had walked home with her, as he was intimately acquainted with the family, "how many people were at Church this morning?"

"Oh, a great number, indeed, my dear father," she replied, throwing off her shawl and bonnet, and taking her seat at the breakfast-table; "a great number I do assure you, which I was very thankful to see. I am very glad indeed that I went, and wish Mamma you had gone with me."

"I hope in future, my dear," replied Mrs. Hamilton, "so to make arrangements in my family, that I may do so; with a very little inconvenience I shall be enabled to attend the service at half-past eight—it is but to rise a little earlier; and I think that no duty should ever be neglected through idleness and want of energy on our part."

"Well, all I can say," remarked Mr. Hamilton; "all I can say is, that it appears

to me we are getting much too fond of forms and ceremonies ; ‘ true devotion,’ Bishop Wilson tells us, ‘ consists in having our hearts *always* devoted to God, as the sole fountain of all happiness ; and who is ready to hear and help his otherwise helpless, miserable creatures. ’ ”

“ Very true,” rejoined Dr. Andrews, “ but at the same time we must not reject or speak of any religious form of devotion as cold and formal. People in general have so little idea of living by rule, and prayer is so frequently regarded as the expression of *feeling* and *emotion*, rather than the *exercise of habit*, they find difficulty in comprehending how the spirit and temper of devotion can exist and operate under what appears to them an unmatured restraint ; but such things are formal only to those who are not practised in religion. Every thing must be formal to him who is only just turning to God, and for the first time seeking intercourse with him ; he must follow some method or other, if he would obtain any steadiness of aim ; and whatever he does will at first seem a dry

and formal duty. This is the penalty of past neglect; but it is quite otherwise with one whom God has brought up in his steadfast fear and love. In such a one the spirit of devotion is a divine quality, growing up insensibly, wrought in the soul secretly and silently by the influence of the Holy Ghost; and the very forms which appear to others constrained, are found to be full of life and grace, as having less of individual human agency, and consequently less of artificial excitement, and leaving the soul more free to the divine work, which none can accomplish in us but the Spirit of Grace."

"But it seems, my dear Sir," interrupted Mrs. Hamilton, "to require no argument to prove the propriety of our having daily service in our churches, it was certainly the custom amongst the primitive Christians, and one followed by our Saviour himself; he told the Jews he was daily in the temple, and called it the house of prayer; and after his ascension we find that the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing and prais-

ing God. (St. Luke xxiv. 53.) And, again, in the description given by St. Luke, we find that all the members of the early Apostolic Church united to the steadfastness in the fellowship as well as doctrine of the Apostles, the godly custom of continuing daily with one accord in the temple (Acts ii. 46); and, therefore, our Liturgy was ordered daily to be used in our churches, and it certainly seems very extraordinary how for so long a time the custom has been neglected, but I am very very happy to find that in these days there appears to have arisen in the minds of men a spirit and desire of returning to the usages of those who knew better than we, the manner in which the Apostles would have us obey their commands."

"For my part," said Laura, "I cannot conceive the necessity for following the customs of the Ancient Fathers as people seem to think now of so much importance; our own answer the same purpose very well, I am sure; and all these new doctrines, that are now spoken of, do but serve to distract

men's minds and make them dissatisfied and unsettled."

"We do not refer to the Ancient Fathers to super-add new doctrines to the Scripture, but only to secure the old," replied Dr. Andrews. "It is much to be suspected that many pretend a zeal for Scripture, who mean nothing by it but to have its fences taken down, that they may deal the more freely with it. They would exclude the ancients to make room for themselves, and throw a kind of slight upon received interpretations, only to advance their own."

"It appears to me," remarked Mrs. Hamilton, "that the glory of God and the good of man, are both more promoted by public than private acts of devotion, when performed in spirit and in truth; for while it is true that private prayer can never be neglected with impunity, the gathering ourselves together in the place which the Lord our God hath chosen to place his name there, is pre-eminently calculated to set forth the glory of that name, and to promote our own and our fellow-creature's good."

“Very true,” replied Dr. Andrews, “and besides I consider the daily service to be a link between the unity and visibility of the Church; and that among the manifold exercises of God’s people, there is none more necessary for all estates, at all times, than public prayer and the due use of the Sacraments. But as this is a duty that we cannot perform at all times, it is necessary that stated periods should be assigned for its performance.”

“And such periods we find appointed by God himself; do we not, Sir?” enquired Mary. “I think in the 29th chapter of Exodus, 38th and 39th verses, I have seen that two lambs were ordered by God to be sacrificed *daily*, one in the morning, and one in the evening.”

“You are right, Miss Hamilton,” said the Rector, “and from that time to the days of the Apostles the same practice was continually enforced in Scripture.”

“Excuse me, Sir,” interrupted Mr. Hamilton, “I willingly allow that under the law such *carnal* ordinances were useful to be

observed, but I cannot consider them so necessary for those who live in the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free; we do not follow other Jewish customs, why should we this?"

"Because, my good friend," replied the Doctor, "we are told to follow our Lord's example in all things, and we find he was daily in the temple, and that the Apostles continued daily with one accord in the temple; from which it is evident that the earliest Christian converts observed those stated times of daily public worship which existed in the Jewish church, then why should not we? Unhappily one day in the seven is now thought by many sufficient for joining in those public prayers which are enjoined upon us daily."

"It certainly appeared until lately sufficient to attend the services of the Church on the first day of the week," said Laura, "and, therefore, if I cannot so easily turn my mind to the new customs that our Church is adopting, or agree to follow them."—

“Do not say *new custom* Laura,” interrupted the Rector, “this excuse of yours is quite without foundation ; what we are talking of is on *old customs*, instituted by God himself as a visible daily offering to his glorious Majesty ; and, therefore, if the Church has instituted ordinances in nowise contrary to God’s word, no private individual is justified in violating them ; but should endeavour to follow and unite with the congregation in the daily service, or any thing else their minister may wish them to observe, provided it cannot be found to be *contrary* to the will of God, contained in the Scriptures.”

Laura was silent, and said no more while the Doctor remained at the Hall ; indeed his arguments were unanswerable ; and therefore she felt it wiser rather to remain a silent auditor of his valuable conversation than to offer opinions which she found to be so perfectly contrary to his.

“It has often occurred to me,” said Emily, “that the service seems but half finished

without a sermon after these week day prayers; it loses, I think, too, much of its advantage as well as its interest."

"You are not the only one who entertains this modern notion," replied Dr. Andrews, "which I assure you is quite at variance with the spiritual one, as that considers the reading of God's word the true preaching."

"Do you refer, Sir, to the 21st verse of the 15th chapter of the Acts," enquired Mary, as she opened her Bible and read, "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day."

"I do," replied the Rector, "and as of God's word our Liturgy is mainly composed, no preaching takes place during the week days; remember preaching is never considered by the Church as any part of Divine Service, but only the prayers and Sacraments, from which in early times many were excluded as unworthy, who were thought fit to hear the exhortation of the minister. God's house, you know, is not called the

house of *preaching*, but of *prayer*, (St. Matt. xxi, 13.)”

“And great, indeed, are the advantages of prayer above preaching,” remarked Mrs. Hamilton, “for while prayer requires the active exertion of our own minds, preaching seems to place us at our ease, to be moulded and fashioned by an outward influence.”

“Yes, preaching, I think, fixes our minds more upon man, too, but prayer upon God,” continued Emily, “preaching may make us vain, conceited judges of our teachers, while prayer leaves us humble and contrite.”

“Preaching is, in fact, the help of ignorance,” said the Doctor, “but prayer the exercise of faith; preaching may bless ourselves, while prayer is the means of blessing thousands.”

“All you have said, my dear Sir,” remarked Mr. Hamilton, “I cannot for a moment doubt to be correct, nor can I attempt to justify any one for neglecting this duty, after what I have now heard, provided he has *time* for the performance of it; and you

must allow as society is at present constituted, there may be some force in what I say, every one has *not time* to attend the daily service.*

"Granting the truth of this, my dear friend," replied the Rector, "yet are the rules of society to supplant those principles which admit of no change? Want of time is an objection that will refute itself: for certainly a man should make time publicly to worship God, for what is that most precious of all our talents intrusted to us if not to dedicate it to God's glory? Certainly those who are bent upon no better object than the amusement or business of this world, cannot attend God's house without lessening their ardour in these pursuits; and I can never think that by devoting not more than a single hour in each day to the public service of his Heavenly Father, any man will thereby diminish his chance of success in his worldly vocation; but then as society is at present constituted, you will say in many instances this is impossible.

True, because tradesmen are generally ten times farther engaged in business than they need, and unless the master gives his hour to God's service, he prevents his servants and dependents from honouring God also. I perfectly acknowledge this; but, then, in all instances it cannot apply, all are not servants, therefore to some must appertain the duty of honouring God and permitting others to follow his example. Where there is a will there is a way, remember. Rising a little earlier can be no hardship, and would be considered of no consequence to forward any plan of our own devising, or add to our earthly pleasures; then how can we slumber on in forgetfulness of Him who giveth us all things so richly to enjoy; whose opening hand filleth all things living with plenteousness; and turn a deaf ear to the glad and early peal calling us to the presence of Him who has protected us during the night, that we may in his own house thank him for his mercies, and pray for a continuance of them during the greater perils of the day? 'Them

that honour me,' God tells us, 'I will honour, and he that seeketh first the kingdom of God and his righteousness shall have all needful things added unto him.' The oftener we approach the throne of grace with that form of sound words set forth in our prayer books, the better," continued Dr. Andrews, rising to take his leave, "for where can we find a spirit of more fervent devotion, confessions more humble, intercessions more expansive, thanksgivings more joyful; none are more fitted for all sorts and conditions of men, none, I think, so animated with the spirit of that heaven-born charity which delighteth in the health, and hopeth all things. It is, indeed, impossible to imagine any situation of life, any mood of mind, any affliction of body or estate, any blessing to be desired, or evil to be deprecated, which finds not a suitable expression in the language of our Evangelical Liturgy. In short, what words can do to stimulate prayer and to direct it; what words can do to bear up those who take upon themselves to speak unto the

Lord, being themselves but dust and ashes, *that* is done by the services of the Church ; and let a man throw his heart into them, breath into them of his own honest self the breath of life, and he need be under no fear that God will hear such words in heaven, his dwelling place, and when he hears, forgive."

"Well this may be something new," said Mr. Hamilton, as he walked with his family across the park to the Parish Church one bright and sunny morning to the early service, "but little did I know that I was so rashly condemning a short time since. If every one could but be persuaded to overcome their foolish scruples, and unworthy objections and excuses, how much time, happiness, and comfort they would discover had been denied them through their own obstinacy and folly. I can never be sufficiently thankful to the Rector for the few words of advice he gave us the other morning. He was right, he was right ! The very sound of the bells brings with it that spirit of de-

votion, and seems to bear to us the notes of those joyful thanksgiving, breathed forth in our beautiful Liturgy; never, never can I be sufficiently thankful for this."

As Mr. Hamilton spoke the last words he followed his family into the house of God.



The Church and the Church School.

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The Church and The Church



"I wish you had been at Church this morning," said Mrs. Smith, as she seated herself in a neighbour's cottage, having looked in to inquire after the sick infant that lay on its mother's knee nearly insensible to all around it; "but I know it was impossible to leave your dear child, and, therefore, it would only have been neglecting one duty to perform another had you gone, which we can hardly think right; but, however, I wish

you had been there to hear Mr. James's sermon; it was addressed especially to mothers. I feel that I have learnt a great deal by it, and hope to profit from his good instruction."

A tear stole down the pale cheek of Mrs. Thompson, as she pressed her infant more closely to her bosom, and replied, "I should have been there too, but for this; I could not leave her, and she will not detain me from the house of God; but although I could not go *there* to pray as I wished to-day, I have tried to join in prayer at home, and you know we are told that we are accepted according to our will and ability, and God, who knows our inward thoughts has, I trust, heard and accepted our prayers for the sake of his beloved Son, for I need his Almighty strength and merciful loving kindness especially now, and feel and confess that He is, indeed, a very present help in trouble; but tell us, if you can spare time, what you remember of Mr. James's discourse, John will, perhaps, help to remind you of any part you may forget," she continued, as

her husband entered the cottage followed by two or three rosy-faced boys and girls, who had been with him to take a quiet walk in the fields after dinner; "there, then, take off your hats quietly, and sit down, for Mrs. Smith is going to be so good as to tell us about the sermon she heard this morning, as I could not go to Church."

"Ah," said John, turning to his neighbour, and taking his son on his knee, "we always hear good advice from our pulpit; but I think what we were told this morning was good indeed, and so plain and earnest too, I hope I shall never forget it."

"I hope we never shall," replied Mrs. Smith, "but I certainly never looked upon the subject in this light before—"

"Let me see," interrupted John, taking up the Bible which lay on the table, "where was the text?"

"In the second chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to Titus and the first verse," answered their neighbour.

"Oh, yes, I remember, here it is," said John, as he read the words, "'But speak thou the things which become sound doc-

trine,' and very plainly he made us all understand the meaning of these words, which I confess have often puzzled me before."

"But those words were addressed to a Bishop," said Mrs. Thompson, "how can we apply them to ourselves?"

"Mr. James mentioned this at the beginning of his sermon," replied her friend, "and told us that although the words were particularly addressed to a Bishop we could all in a measure apply them to ourselves, as it is necessary for us *all* to speak and think in a proper manner of our faith and church, and that, I fear, has not been done of late."

"No, that is proved clearly enough by the little importance that is attached to every thing belonging to it," said John; "how true every thing was that we were told about the school; but this is not telling Mary what we heard; she will not understand much if we only make these remarks among ourselves; therefore, I will leave you, Mrs. Smith, to tell her all you can, for I was sadly grieved she could not hear it, as it related so very particularly to our children."

"Well, then, first of all, I believe," said

Mrs. Smith, "Mr. James spoke to us of the Church, and told us that all who left it to become Dissenters committed sin in the sight of God."

"How so?" enquired Lucy. "I never knew there was any thing wrong in being a Dissenter,—where is the harm?"

"The sin is this," said Mrs. Smith, "St. Paul you know commanded us in the first chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians and tenth verse 'To speak the same thing:' here it is, 'Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same judgment.' The divisions here mentioned, Mr. James told us are caused by Dissenters leaving the Church St. Paul addressed; of this Church, our Church of England is a branch or part, and was founded by Christ himself; therefore Dissenters by leaving the Church commit the sin of disobedience to this command of Christ made through his inspired Apostles, for it is as necessary for us to follow one command of the Apostles as

another, knowing they are the words of Christ spoken by them, after his death—”

“And besides this, if you remember,” interrupted John Thompson, “he told us that some people think it is sufficient to pay attention only to the way of salvation, or as he called it Evangelical truth; but by doing so they overlook the very important consideration of order or fellowship in the Church, which St. Paul has expressly commanded us to attend to; this order is entirely disregarded by Dissenters, or they would not leave the Church, and thereby cause disorder and division in the body of Christians which our Saviour and the Apostles desired might for ever remain perfectly united; therefore we must pay attention to the *orders of the Apostles respecting the government* and unity of the Church, as well as to the way of salvation through the death of Christ—this is sound doctrine—Evangelical Truth or Salvation through Christ must not be separated from Apostolical order, the preserving and continuing in our Church the order and unity set down by the Apostles as necessary to its preservation and government.”

“I quite understand this,” said Lucy, “as St. Paul told us not to leave the society which he founded and commanded all Christians to belong to, we must do wrong and commit the sin of disobedience if we separate from it or break the rules he laid down as to the way that society should be ruled or governed; this is very clear, and so I suppose by our Church being governed by Bishops and Clergymen that St. Paul commanded it to be so.”

“Yes,” answered her husband, “Mr. James told us to refer to the seventeenth verse of the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews where it says, ‘Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief.’ Therefore as St. Paul placed Bishops, Priests, and Deacons in the Church to be its governors after his death, and commanded the members of that Church to be perfectly united and to obey them, no one can for a moment dare to disobey him, I should think, and worship in separate chapels, despising all authority of powers higher than their own, excepting

through ignorance; for if he appointed Bishops, Priests, and Deacons or Curates to govern the Church, surely he meant that they should be continued in the Church, and, therefore, we cannot do wrong in having and obeying them."

"No, certainly not," replied Lucy Thompson, "but do you not think that sending our children to the schools of those who despise this order in the Church, and have caused division in it by separating themselves from it, is almost as bad as being Dissenters, for we are bringing them up to disobey the commands of Christ and the Apostles?"

"Undoubtedly," replied her neighbour, "and to this very important subject Mr. James especially directed our attention; but you see he first of all told us why it is better to be a Churchman than a Dissenter, and then he could more easily make us understand why it is better to send our children to Church schools than to those of Dissenters, who have disobeyed separated from the Church."

"True," replied John, "and very much ashamed of myself, I do assure you, I felt."

"And so did I," interrupted Mrs. Smith,

“for I felt as if his words were purposely directed to me, knowing, as I did, that for the very reasons he condemned us for sending our children even to the Church schools, I had sent some of mine to Dissenters’—*for the sake of having them clothed.* You cannot think how kindly and earnestly he told us of our error; of course he could be no gainer by the children going to the Church schools, and, therefore, he must have begged us for the sake of their eternal welfare to teach them, *that they are not sent to school for the sake of having clothes, but only to learn their duty to God and to ourselves;* this he feared we never taught them, but rather by our bad example at home, prevented them deriving any benefit from the instruction they received at school.”

“And then, too,” said Thompson, “so clearly were we shewn the sin of leaving the Church, that it proved to me we must be sinning in teaching our children to despise it merely for the sake of *getting clothes.* So I made up my mind then in the House of God to do so no more, but immediately to speak to Lucy about removing them from

the Dissenter's schools to those of the Church, into which you know we were told they would be admitted by making application to the Rector or Schoolmaster. I cannot bear the thought of teaching them disobedience to those who have by God's authority the rule over us ; for I find we are not told in the Bible that it is of no consequence whether we have Bishops or not, or that one preacher of the Gospel is the same as another ; St. Paul did not tell us to *disobey* them, or that it was *improper* for the Church to be governed by Bishops ; but that those who separated from it were to be avoided, (Rom. xvi. 17). Besides I cannot but see in every respect how wrong it is to bring up our children, some Dissenters and some Churchmen, now that it has been so plainly pointed out to me a sin in the sight of God, and the destroyer of all peace and happiness at home ; for Mr. James told us that he could not think what kind of conversation we could have of a Sunday evening, if we all differed in opinion ; instead of quietly talking over what we had heard at Church and reading the Bible, there could be nothing but dis-

putings and divisions, each one of course saying the things they had been taught at their school, and it is certainly no more than we can expect; and I thank God for the instruction afforded me this day through the teaching of His Holy Apostolic Church, and oh, that it may be blessed to me and all of us, for the sake of His Son, our Saviour, Christ the Lord."

"Do you remember what we were told about one of the disciples of St. John?" enquired Mrs. Smith.

"You mean St. Ignatius," replied John, "I think Mr. James told us that it was said by this holy man, that *without Bishops and Ministers there is no Church; and that we are to be subject to the Bishops as to the Lord, and to the Presbyters or Clergymen as to the Apostles of Christ*. Here, I think, if we wanted any proof of its being proper to have our Church governed by Bishops this would be sufficient. St. Ignatius, you say, was a disciple or follower of the St. John who stood by our Saviour at his crucifixion; he must have known what was right, better than those who think that every one is

wrong but themselves I fear ; but although we see their error we must not be their judges ; to the Lord they must either stand or fall, therefore let us pray for them and watch for ourselves ; although I must confess as well as this it seems to be our own duty to endeavour and persuade them of their error in leaving the Church ; but we are going away from the subject of Mr. James's discourse, and I have not yet told Lucy all that we heard, for besides this he particularly endeavoured to shew us the importance of good example to our children, without which all they could be taught at school he said would be of little use."

"True, very true," replied John, "for if our children see that we pay no attention to duties which they are taught to consider it incumbent upon them as Christians to perform, the consequence must be that they will not benefit by the good advice and instruction given to them at school : there they are taught that they must keep holy the Sabbath day—that they must not swear or take God's holy name in vain—that there are two Sacraments, Baptism, and the Supper of the

Lord ; but if they find *we* never go to Church, and are always swearing and taking God's name in vain ; and whenever the Sacrament is to be taken, we turn away from the table of the Lord, and leave the house of God as though we had nothing to do with it : what will our children think ?”

“Why, of course, John, they will think that what they are taught, is of no consequence,” said his wife, “and that the only thing worth going to school for is *to get clothes*. The little time that we poor people can give up to our children for learning must not be wasted. And grateful, indeed, I hope we all feel to those who so kindly pay for their instruction ; for I believe most of the schools our children go to, are kept up by our richer neighbours ; therefore it is very improper, indeed, for us to suffer them to waste the instruction afforded them, or to teach them ingratitude by leading them to think the benefit they obtain is nothing but clothes. How many poor children there are older than you, Billy, who cannot read and have no school to go to : and how many men and women, too, there are who have never been

taught so much as you, Arthur, already know; they cannot read the Bible, and whenever they are in sickness or trouble must wait till a neighbour comes in, who will, perhaps, be able to spell a few words to them; indeed, my dear children, you cannot be thankful enough for being allowed to go to school to be taught your duty to God, and to be brought up in the ways of holiness and peace."

"Well, I hope," said Mrs. Smith, "that with the blessing of God we shall all profit by what we heard; I very much liked the part of the sermon about the Church. Yes, I was glad to hear that, through the mercy of God, the Church of England has kept the doctrine and fellowship of the Apostles entire; and that in the creeds or belief, the articles and Church service, the true faith has been preserved."

"But still we were told that many people think of Christianity only as a doctrine, and forget that it is also a Church or Society, and that it is necessary to set much store by their fellowship with the Apostolic communion."

"The very thing I was reading the other day, and I will read it over to you, if you

please," said Thompson, taking from the shelf a pamphlet, " ' By the great mercy of Almighty God, the Church of England has, for the most part, maintained entire both the doctrine and the fellowship of the Apostles. Her threefold order of ministry has been derived by regular transmission from the Apostles, through episcopal ordination; and from them she has received the power of administering the Sacraments, whereby the mystical union between Christ and his Church began and continued. While at the same time in her creeds, her articles, and her liturgy, she preserves the true faith, which was once for all declared to the Saints.

"Nevertheless, while as a Church we maintain the Apostolic doctrine and fellowship, the prevailing tendency of the present age has been to view Christianity only as a doctrine, and to forget that it is also a Church or Society. You will meet with thousands of professedly religious people who boast that they are living in the true evangelical doctrine; and, but with some few, here and there, who set much store by their fellowship with the Apostolic commu-

nion, Scriptural doctrine, as it is believed to be, is preached throughout the land; but Church fellowship is marred and broken, and I fear, little valued or understood even by members of the Church itself. The Sacrament of Baptism, whereby we are grafted into the body of Christ, and receive the first beginning of spiritual life, is looked on by many as a mere symbol of the *doctrine* of salvation by the blood of Christ; and the Lord's Supper is considered nothing more than a mere commemorative rite, emblematical of the death on the Cross, and useful for the quickening of our faith. You will often see large congregations listening attentively to the preaching of Scriptural doctrine of salvation through Christ; but when the time comes for joining in the Christian fellowship, by partaking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, straightway are dispersed and gone as if they had nothing to do with the matter."

"This prevailing preference of doctrine to fellowship and order has been productive of the worst results. It has split the body of professing Christians into a variety of sects,

who seem as utterly unconscious of the sinfulness of Scism, (that is dissent) as if the Apostolic epistles had never been written, or were not full of admonitions against the guilt incurred by those who rend the body of Christ. Many people seem utterly blind to all that Scripture says on this awful subject. Let us hope, however, that a brighter day is beginning to dawn; let us trust that this *half gospel* will no longer be preached amongst us, but that the full and perfect system of the Christian faith will now again be set forth before the world. What important result might we not expect from this *republication*—for it may almost be called so, of the Gospel! How confidently might we look for the time, and that not far distant, when the sects and parties which would disgrace the Christian profession might merge into the one true apostolic communion, and of real visible fellowship subsist. Then with what brighter hopes might we go forth into the hosts of heathenism to spread the Gospel net, and gathering the nations to the Church. No longer divided and disunited—one preaching her Gospel, and one

another—one belonging to one communion, and one another—but all exerting one united strength—all speaking the same thing,—all animated by the same spirit, and joined in the same fellowship—we should, indeed, appear the messengers of the One great unchangeable eternal God, and the world would then receive our mission.”

“Very good, indeed,” said Mrs. Smith, “very excellent instruction, at least I feel it so, for I candidly confess I never thought much about this Unity myself till now; but surely we are not acting right, now we know how sinful it is to cause divisions in the Church, in sending our children to be brought up Dissenters, as we were just now saying; and, therefore, I think, we should directly remove them into the Church Schools. You know we have only to speak to Mr. James, or the Schoolmaster; and as to the shoes they may have given them at these places, it is of very little consequence, in my opinion, now. I would sooner see them go bare-footed, than lead them to despise the Church as the institution of our blessed Saviour, and cause the divisions in so expressly forbidden by him through

the mouths of his Apostles—‘Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it;’ to bring him up a Dissenter, and a Dissenter he will remain—although I really once thought it no consequence when they went while so young; but I plainly perceive my mistake. Don’t you remember Mr. James said that ‘the education of children is a work of deep responsibility, a work of labour and care, but not of sorrow, nor of irksomeness. Can it be an irksome task,’ he asked, ‘to train up an immortal soul for heaven? Can it be a labour of sorrow, a labour which any Christian parent would grudge to prepare an heir of immortality for that inheritance which is purchased for him? True, it is a sacred charge, a fearful responsibility, which God commits to each parent. He puts out as it were to us a soul to nurse, an immortal soul, which must be rendered back pure as we received it from the font; but then he has provided the means of spiritual nourishment, and he has promised His blessing on our pious exertions; and then he repeated the words, ‘Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not de-

part from it,' and told us to accept this promise to the letter, and confidentially look for God's blessing on our faithful labours."

"Yes," returned John, "I remember Mr. James saying this, and as Lucy cannot leave the baby I will go with you to morrow morning up to the Rectory if you like; for I cannot be happy until the children are all placed in the Church School—they were all baptized into the Church, and therefore we are doubly to blame in bringing them up out of the Church to which we ourselves belong."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Smith, "I shall be glad, indeed to go with you, but I have not spoken to their father about it; and I never act in anything of this sort without consulting him; but I am sure when I have talked to him he will not object to our plan, for he has often thought it wrong to act with regard to them as we were, and to morrow morning before nine, I will look in, and I hope I shall find the baby better."

So saying Mrs. Smith wished her neighbours good morning, and with a light step (because with a clear conscience) she bent her way to her peaceful home—a pattern and example to all Christian mothers.



